REMARKS

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamashita et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,140,418). In response, Applicants cancelled claims 1-6, without prejudice, and amended independent claim 7 to include the feature of claim 13, and respectfully traverse the rejection. Applicant traverses the rejection because a pneumatic tire, which has a curved surface, cannot be properly coated using conventional methods such as those taught by Yamashita.

Amended claim 7 of the present Application now defines the surface which is intended to be coated with a sealing material as corresponding to an inner surface of a pneumatic tire. Since the inner surface of a pneumatic tire has a curved surface, it is not possible to properly coat a sealing material uniformly by using ordinary coating methods such as those taught by Yamashita. In particular, the present application advantageously teaches a method of applying a sealing material that uses a rubber based sealing material with a viscosity of 20 to 200 Pa · s/100 °C, which is pulverized into a powdered material at a temperature lower than, or equal to a brittle temperature of the rubber based sealing material. Then, the powdered material is spray-coated on the inner surface of the pneumatic tire. Thus, a coating of the inner surface of the pneumatic tire can be easily performed and an even coating is provided. However, when the viscosity of the rubber based sealing material is not in the above-defined range taught by Applicants, a uniform coating does not occur. (See paragraph [0014] of Applicant's Specification).

Yamashita discloses a crosslinked rubber (B) which is pulverized after cooling under liquid nitrogen. Then, the powdered material as a raw material is melt-mixed with a block copolymer (A) to produce a thermal plastic polymer composition, whereby hermetic materials are

formed such as sealing material, packing material and a gasket by "melt molding or forming" of the compositions by using such processes as injecting molding, extrusion molding, or blow molding. However, Yamashita fails to disclose or suggest spray-coating of a powdered material of the cooling-pulverized crosslinked rubber (B) as a sealing material on an inner surface of a pneumatic tire, as now recited in amended claim 7 of the present Application. Furthermore, Yamashita fails to disclose or suggest defining the powdered material of a cooling-pulverized crosslinked rubber (B) as having a viscosity of 20 to 200 Pa · s/100 °C. Accordingly, even if a powdered material of such crosslinked rubber (B) should be spray-coated, which Yamashita does not teach, it is still not possible to form a uniform coating surface using the teachings of Yamashita since Yamashita fails to teach or suggest the viscosity range taught by the present Application. For these reasons, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 7-12 and 14 is respectfully requested.

New claim 15 is added and further defines the range of the viscosity of the rubber based sealing material. Applicants respectfully request allowance of new claim 15 for the reasons recited above with respect to the rejection of independent claim 7, and also based on the features recited in this claim.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,
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